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SUBJECT: DECEMBER 11 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: SIX-PARTY TALKS, TORTURE IN TIBET, SAKHAROV PRIZE, CENTRAL ECONOMIC WORK CONFERENCE, SINO-FRENCH RELATIONS, SINO-POLISH RELATIONS

11. Key points at the December 11 MFA press briefing:

-- The Six-Party Talks Heads of Delegation (HOD) meeting is still ongoing, as the parties are "discussing and deciding" formalities in bilateral sessions as well as plenary sessions.

-- China has "taken note" of a recent Free Tibet report claiming that the use of torture by Chinese authorities is widespread in Tibet, but questions the credibility of the report.

-- MFA spokesman Liu Jianchao said it is "ironic" that a "criminal" such as Hu Jia is being given a human rights award.

-- China hopes that the "initiatives and arrangements" developed during the Central Economic Work Conference meetings earlier this week, as well as the stimulus package, will counter the effects of the current economic crisis and quell social unrest.

-- China claims that reports of a cyber attack on the website of the French Embassy are speculative.

-- Liu said that French President Sarkozy's comments that his meeting with the Dalai Lama was not meant to harm Sino-French relations is "not valid" and that it "won't solve current difficulties" between France and China.

-- After expressing its "strong dissatisfaction" with the meeting between Polish President Lech Kaczynski and the Dalai Lama, China urges Poland to "do nothing to harm Sino-Polish relations."

Six-Party Talks

12. The Six-Party Talks Heads of Delegation (HOD) meeting is still ongoing, announced MFA spokesman Liu Jianchao at the December 11 MFA press briefing. He added that the parties are "discussing and deciding" formalities in bilateral sessions as well as plenary sessions. The conclusion of the talks, he noted, will be a "political decision" made by the parties. He said China is appreciative of the "arduous efforts" of the parties, and hopes that these talks will "expand consensus for positive results."

Detention of Charter 08 signatory

13. When asked to elaborate on the detention of Liu Xiaobo, a human rights activist and signatory of Charter 08, Liu said that he was "not in a position to answer" the question, but that he expects the matter to be "handled in accordance with the law."

Torture in Tibet

14. Liu said he had "taken note" of a recent Free Tibet report claiming that the use of torture by Chinese authorities is widespread in Tibet, but that he is "not aware" of the organization

that published the report, nor is he certain of the credibility of their sources. He said that if there is concrete evidence to prove the report's allegations, China "will investigate." Otherwise, he added that China considers torture an "infringement of human rights" and is "resolutely against torture" as a matter of policy.

Sakharov Prize

¶ 15. When asked about whether or not China will allow activist Hu Jia's wife to travel to Europe next week to accept the Sakharov Prize awarded to her husband by the European Parliament, Liu emphasized that the award is being presented despite China's opposition to it. He added that it is "ironic" that a "criminal" is being given a human rights award.

Economic Crisis and Social Unrest

¶ 16. All countries are affected by the global financial crisis, said Liu, including China. China hopes that its recently announced stimulus package will promote "smooth and rapid" economic development, and that there will not be social unrest. Liu added that the Central Economic Work Conference meetings earlier this week announced "initiatives and arrangements" for the coming year, and that China "hopes this will work" to counter the effects of the current economic crisis. As for the Government's call to urge Chinese airlines to cancel or postpone aircraft scheduled for delivery in 2009, Liu provided no substantive explanation but said that he expects the matter to "proceed smoothly."

Cyber Attack on French Embassy Website

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¶ 17. China has taken note that there reportedly was a cyber attack on the website of the French Embassy, said Liu. Liu added that this was most likely speculation, however, and that no "questions or concerns" had been raised by the French. He stressed that China is "against hacking" and that similar reports in the future should be based on "solid proof" and refrain from "targeting China."

Sarkozy's Statement "Not Valid"

¶ 18. As for French President Sarkozy's comments that his meeting with the Dalai Lama was not meant to harm Sino-French relations, Liu said that this statement is "not valid" and that it "won't solve current difficulties" between the two countries. He emphasized that France is "well-aware of the severity" of the situation, and that China expects it to "take concrete measures for the healthy development of Sino-French relations."

Dalai Lama and Polish President

¶ 19. Liu said that China expressed its "strong dissatisfaction" with the meeting between Polish President Lech Kaczynski and the Dalai Lama, which took place on December 10 in Warsaw, and urges Poland to "do nothing to harm Sino-Polish relations."

China-Japan-ROK Leaders' Meeting

¶ 10. China "attaches importance" to cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in "economic, financial, cultural, investment and personnel" realms, said Liu. He noted that the upcoming China-Japan-ROK Leaders' Meeting is of "important significance" due to the financial crisis. As for the first-ever China-ROK strategic dialogue currently in progress, involving Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya, Liu had no specific information to pass on but said that this meeting, as well as the China-Japan-ROK Leader's Meeting, is important for "East Asian cooperation and peace and development."

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